Drafting the Cultural Blueprint: Differences in American and Japanese Education

1. **Intro:** Educational institutions as “backbone of culture” in the world.
   1. **Evidence:** “Understanding the Japanese people and culture requires understanding the factors that mold them…Given the large amount of time that Japanese students spend in schools, it is little wonder that the education system plays a tremendous role in determining the fabric of Japanese society” (Johnson and Johnson).
   2. **Thesis**: In examining the form and structure of Japan’s basic educational process, one may also begin to see a number of ways that it reflects and contrasts with America’s established educational system. By paying attention to the ways in which the two systems differ, one may begin to develop a greater understanding of the unique aspects of each and one can also consider the culture implications of such differences.
2. **Body #1:** Japan’s elementary school system and its differences from the American system
   1. **Evidence:** “Our Country must move from its third-class position to second class…to first, and ultimately to the leading position among all countries of the world. The best way to do this is [by laying] the foundations of elementary education” (Lewis 10).
   2. Differences in Japanese school system lend themselves towards Japanese social structure: small, close-knit communities—which are perpetuated in their professional communities.
      1. First difference from American system: children in a Japanese elementary classroom are likely to be in close relations for the entirety of their preadolescent lives.
         1. **Evidence:** “All children enter school in the April after their sixth birthday, and they move up together each year, regardless of academic performance. Thus the *uchi* group, which probably formed rather casually in the neighborhood…is quite likely to stay together until graduation from middle school” (84).
      2. Elementary teachers rotate between grade levels, often teaching the same group of students for two consecutive years
      3. Japanese career expectation is generally that of a life-long commitment to a profession
3. Student responsibility and classroom discipline in Japanese schools

(and continues)

1. **Conclusion:** Japanese cultural values of community, self-discipline, and long-term approaches to discipline and learning are propagated in their educational system…U.S. schools, in contrast, tend to be more fundamentally competitive and focused on immediate compliance of the pupil, and the quality of educational opportunity is heavily influenced by geographic location and socioeconomic status…a direct result of the capitalist culture that drives much of American society.
   1. The goal should not be to adopt one system to the exclusion of the other, but instead to transcend the boundaries of cultural judgment and draft a future educational blueprint from the successes and failures of both.